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RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 6024
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 5322
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 2862
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 2087
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2859
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2778
RHMFSS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFSS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 001659

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CLASS MARKING PARA 7)

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV KDEM KE ZI

SUBJECT: KENYA TAKES STRONG STAND AGAINST ZIMBABWE

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

¶11. (U) In early June during a visit to South Africa, Prime Minister Raila Odinga denounced the deteriorating political situation in Zimbabwe after the March 29 elections. He was the first Kenyan official to do so publicly. He continued to speak out in public events and meetings with senior USG officials during a mid-June visit to Washington, DC. Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula initially sought to distance the government from Odinga's statement, but the Ambassador weighed in to make clear that we regarded Odinga's statements as the official position of the Kenyan government. Wetangula then followed up with a statement supporting the PM's comments. Now both Odinga and Wetangula have taken a strong stand against Mugabe -- one that stands in stark contrast to the less than forthright consensus statement adopted at the recent African Union summit in Cairo. Most recently, the Government of Kenya has publicly refused to recognize the Mugabe regime as legitimate. End Summary.

Prime Minister Speaks Out
(Repeatedly) Against Mugabe

¶12. (U) Prime Minister Raila Odinga was the first Government of Kenya official to denounce the deteriorating political climate in the aftermath of Zimbabwe's March 29 elections. During an early June visit to South Africa, Odinga called the situation in Zimbabwe "a big embarrassment for the whole continent." "We cannot condone what is going on there," he continued.

¶13. (C) During his trip to Washington, DC in mid-June, Odinga continued to speak out: in a June 17 forum sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Odinga derided other African leaders for remaining silent "when disaster is looming in Zimbabwe." The next day in a meeting with the Secretary (septel), Odinga offered to reach out to other African leaders on the issue. In particular, Odinga said he would ask Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi to leverage Libya's current role in the UN Security Council to be more helpful on Zimbabwe issues.

Foreign Minister Follows... Eventually

¶4. (C) There was no official reaction from Nairobi immediately after Odinga's comments. On the contrary, behind the scenes we heard that government officials were trying to find a way to distance the government from Odinga's statements. Immediately after Odinga's return from the U.S., the Ambassador wrote to Wetangula to state that the U.S. welcomed Odinga's strong statements on Zimbabwe and regarded them as the Kenyan government's position.

¶5. (U) On June 19, Wetangula issued an official statement that supported Odinga's position and called on Mugabe to "respect the wishes of the people of Zimbabwe" by establishing an environment amenable to a free and fair runoff election.

¶6. (U) Over the weekend of 4-5 July, Wetangula made his most forward-leaning statement yet: that the Government of Kenya will not recognize the Mugabe regime as legitimate.

Where Does Kenya Stand on the Way Forward?

¶7. (C) Odinga told visiting Congressmen last week that he and President Kibaki had discussed the Zimbabwe issue and agreed on the need to take a firm position. He even mentioned that he and the President had mooted the possibility of Kenya playing a mediating role -- Kibaki drawing on his lines to Mugabe and Odinga drawing on his connections with Tsvangarai.
RANNEBERGER